



TORONTO'S FREE LIBRARY.

FACTS FOR THE CITIZENS.

WE are all anxious for the future welfare and good government of our city, and a very important agency by which this result may be attained is intelligence. Ignorance, if not the parent of crime, is a very near relation, and any movement that will hold in check the degrading tendencies of the times must merit the attention and support of all good citizens. This scheme of a free library has special claims upon the public on account of its non-sectarian character. Within its walls the Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, may fraternize, and on its shelves their various views will have a place. With this necessity before us I refer you to what has been done elsewhere. The city of Boston has perhaps

THE LARGEST FREE LIBRARY IN THE WORLD,

and it is to the general use of it that her citizens attribute her superiority in city government and general intelligence over New York. Such a hold has this idea of free reading on the Americans that in January, 1880, there were 3,776 public libraries in the United States, containing over 300 volumes each—the total being 14,500,000 volumes. Even in Texas—that semi-civilized State—they have availed themselves of a recent enactment whereby they can tax for library purposes at the will of the Council. Down in the Southern States, where one would naturally look for a limited reading public, they are provided with civic machinery for establishing libraries, and many cities have well chosen and increasing collections of books for the free use of every ratepayer. In Mexico, even, this civilizing agency is an institution, and every publisher is by law compelled to supply the national library with two copies of every book published free. In Great Britain five libraries retain this privilege, and it has become a custom with the leading publishers to give a copy of each new book to the leading libraries.

IN THE UNITED STATES

they have ceased arguing the question. They accept the necessity of a free library, as they do gas works, in every town (for the fact is accomplished before it becomes a city), and assess and build accordingly. Here are a few cities taken at random, showing how maintained, &c.:

Place.	Source of Revenue.	Amount.	No. of Volumes	Circulation.	City's Popul'n.
Cincinnati,	Board of Educat'n,	\$34,572	132,807	769,367	280,000
	City Library fund,	18,996			
Chicago,	City Library fund,	33,763	67,722	374,866	503,000
	City appropriation,	2,500			
Watertown, N.Y.,	Dog tax,	294	24,270	27,233	10,600
	City appropriation,	7,000			
Lawrence, Mass.,	Dog tax,	1,320	40,062	134,052	40,000
	City appropriation,	17,672	29,155	130,443	170,000
Cleveland,	City appropriation,	3,200			
Taunton, Mass., .	Dog tax,	1,127	16,878	61,347	21,000
	City appropriation,	8,000			
Worcester, Mass.,	Dog tax,	2,810	47,521	156,398	59,000
Newton, Mass., .	City appropriation.	7,500	17,013	83,393	17,000

We cannot, of course, compare Toronto with such cities as Boston and Chicago, but surely we should not be outdone by every small manufacturing town in New England in the matter of intelligence. And while on this question of intelligence, it must not be taken for granted that reading for amusement is the sole aim of a rate-supported library. Out of a classified report of the Birmingham library of 1874, we learn that no less than 4,523 volumes were issued to engineers and machinists, and 5,458 volumes to jewellers and gold and silversmiths—works of a practical and technical character in their respective trades. This was in addition to the thousands of readers who daily made use of the "Reference Library," in which is comprised the more costly works on mechanics, &c. On this point, a writer says, "The advantages of a library are no longer of a purely literary character, and are becoming less and less so, that the art and mysteries of manufacturing are no longer taught by word of mouth alone to indentured apprentices, but that the master workman of the nineteenth century speaks through books to all, and then in proportion as our workmen become intelligent and skilled does their labour increase in value to themselves and to the State." Across the lines each State passes its own Act,

EMPOWERING MUNICIPALITIES TO TAX FOR LIBRARY PURPOSES.

The following illustrates the variety with which the public pulse and purse is felt and bled:—In Maine the Act provides for assessing \$1 per head for founding the library and 25c. per head for maintenance thereafter; Vermont, \$1 per head and 50c. for maintenance; Connecticut, the same; Ohio, half a mill in the \$; Wisconsin, one mill in the \$; Iowa, half a mill in the \$; Illinois, from 1-5 to 2 mills in the \$.

We will now cross the Atlantic and see

HOW THE FREE LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT WAS RECEIVED IN GREAT BRITAIN.

Figures are more convincing than words, and the following list of towns and cities wherein the question of library or no library was discussed shows how it was settled:—

<i>Cities.</i>	<i>How Decided.</i>	<i>Population.</i>
Birkenhead,	Only one against,	90,000
Blackburn,	Only two against,	77,000
Bridgewater,	Unanimous,	
Burslem,	Unanimous,	30,000
Chester,	No poll demanded	51,000

Dundee,	Unanimous,	122,000
Exeter,	No poll demanded,	34,000
Hawick,	Unanimous,	15,000
Leeds,	Adopted at public meeting,	311,000
Manchester,	Only 40 against,	400,000
Middleboro,	Only one against,	47,000
Newcastle,	Adopted at public meeting,	129,000
Northampton,	Adopted at public meeting,	50,000
Nottingham,	Only one against,	170,000
Plymouth,	No poll demanded,	75,000
Preston,	No poll demanded,	88,000
Roachdale,	Adopted at public meeting,	75,000
Southport,	Adopted at public meeting,	35,000
South Shields,	Adopted at public meeting,	65,000
Swansea,	Decided by a show of hands,	70,000
Tynemouth,	Unanimous,	43,000
Walsail,	Adopted at public meeting,	50,000
Westminster,		
(Parish,)	Only three against,	68,000
Wigan,	Adopted at public meeting,	45,000
Wolverhampton,	Only 6 against,	70,000
Worcester,	Unanimous,	40,000

The foregoing fairly indicates the tide of popular feeling wherever it has been tested in England and Scotland. Free libraries are certainly not so numerous in Great Britain as in the United States. Class distinction is much more clearly marked in the Old World than on this side the Atlantic, and that same wave of democracy that has done so much to merge classes and creeds among our neighbours will no doubt in time reach the Dominion without necessarily weakening the loyalty of the people.

What possible arguments against the establishment of

A FREE LIBRARY IN TORONTO

there may be I cannot say. No Canadian who has been beyond the limits of his own country can oppose it without insult to his own intelligence. Every year hundreds of youths graduate at the Public Schools and go out upon the world, drifting about like a rudderless ship upon a treacherous sea—without any link between giddy youth and sober manhood. That missing link is the public library. It is the caliban of the nineteenth century, and the only practical adult school with which the State can supply us. In this respect

FRANCE IS A SHINING EXAMPLE.

Her Provincial libraries have been her salvation, and the wonderful progress made by the lower classes in the Third Republic can be ascribed to no other cause. A free library in every town, with sub-depositories at convenient intervals, would elevate the standard of popular education more rapidly and surely than any other method. It would be for the interests of the State if, as in France, inducements should be offered for the formation, growth and maintenance of public libraries.

So much for their advantages. Now as to

THE EXPENSE OF THIS EDUCATOR.

Last year the sum of £165,000 was voted for a new library building in Sydney, New South Wales, and £6,400 for maintenance for the year. The income of the Boston establishment for 1878 was \$124,200, of which \$14,400 was spent in books. Our country is too young, and the struggle for bread and butter too general, for the princely bequests that grace the records of other lands. To estab-

lish free libraries in Baltimore, George Peabody donated \$1,400,000; the Astors gave \$700,000 for New York, and Walter N. Newberry left \$2,000,000 for a similar purpose in Chicago. Philadelphia received from Dr. James Rush \$1,000,000 to maintain a library, and Asa Packer left, by will, \$500,000 to the library of Lehigh University. These are large sums from large-hearted and long-pursed men. Let our men of means do their proportion. Never before was there such a chance to live in the hearts and memories of their countrymen as now offers, and though the city may, and undoubtedly will, establish a library, yet something more than the proceeds of a fractional assessment will be required to put our city in the same grade that cities of a like size and importance occupy in other countries.

A PRACTICAL SCHEME FOR TORONTO.

Coming down to figures, we propose to ask the Government to pass a Permissive Act empowering municipalities to assess, as a maximum, half a mill on the \$ for library purposes. Such an appropriation would give us a start, and if supplemented by private donations the year 1882 will see this desirable boon an accomplished fact in Toronto. Thereafter, and within five years, I venture to say that every city in Canada will boast of its free library affording full access to the "heritage of the ages"—works on mechanics, applied sciences, and the endless benefits resulting from the "art preservative." There are two feasible methods of establishing a library from municipal funds. One plan—advanced by my colleague in the Council, Alderman Hallam—is to forestall and fund a portion of the rate so as to erect handsome and suitable buildings at once and fill (or partially fill) them with say 60,000 or 80,000 volumes the first year. The other plan would be to commence on a more moderate scale and spend the money in books, etc., as it is granted. Either way would secure a grand result for any corporation availing itself of the Act. I would advocate such an establishment that the maintenance thereof would not exceed \$5000 a year for Librarian, Assistants, Caretaker, gas, &c., so that the purchase account for new books, periodicals and newspapers may be as large as possible. Once it is a *fact accompli*, the substantial donations already promised by wealthy and generous citizens can be accepted, and we will have an institution to which we can point with pride—a pride all the more pardonable because it will be the pioneer free library in Canada. We must not stop at books, however, valuable as they are, but see to it that a comfortable and well-supplied reading-room is attached, where the scientific and illustrated journals now so indispensable to the progressive artisan, may be consulted. It is through such periodicals that the triumphs of the inventor reach the eye and ear of the waiting public, in the same way that the master thinkers of the day reach their audience through the magazines. Magazine literature is confessedly the most brilliant writing of the present generation, yet how many thousands of our citizens never read one? Simply because our city has never provided the facilities elsewhere to be had. Moreover, in the near future

A CITY MUSEUM

will be added, and it will astonish the antedeluvian hard-heads amongst us to see how rapidly a collection will grow, even by voluntary gifts of curiosities, coins, etc., There are now objects of interest in scores of houses in the city and neighbourhood ready for contribution to a free library and museum so soon as it may be established.

Should any timid ratepayer fancy he can see in this movement civic ruin, let us see what it amounts to. Take the case of a small householder, assessed say at \$500. The annual charge to such a man would be 25c.—the cost of one dinner at a farmer's hotel! Hence it can be no burden to the poor man, and the rich man will surely not betray his ignorance by raising his voice or his vote against it.

JOHN TAYLOR.

TORONTO, October 25th, 1881.